

NEWS RELEASE



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SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - June 8, 2006

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced today the unsealing of a 15-count indictment charging Richard Elizalda, a Customs and Border Protection Officer (CBPO) assigned to the San Ysidro Port of Entry, Raquel Arin, Perla Centella, Carmen Alvarado, Sandra Munoz, Kenneth Web, Victor Gomez, and Jorge Gomez with Bribery by a Public Official, Conspiracy to Bring in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain, Bringing in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain, Importation of Marijuana, Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Distribute, Filing a False Tax Return and Criminal Forfeiture. All eight of the defendants are currently in custody.

According to the Indictment, Elizalda used his official position at the San Ysidro Port of Entry to allow illegal aliens into the United States in violation of United States immigration laws. In return for his participation in the alien smuggling activity, he received cash bribes and a 2000 Lexus vehicle. Specifically, the indictment charges that Elizalda arranged specific times with Raquel Arin and others to allow vehicles

to pass through his primary inspection lane for the purpose of alien smuggling. On multiple occasions as alleged in the indictment, Elizalda allowed vehicles registered to, or rented by, the defendants to pass uninspected through his primary inspection lane.

The indictment was the result of a two-year investigation entitled, "Operation Permanent Wave," involving agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) - Office of Inspector General, Internal Revenue Service, and DHS Customs and Border Protection Anti-Terrorism Contraband Enforcement Team.

United States Attorney Lam said, "Although it occurs infrequently, it is still devastating when we learn that federal officers have betrayed, rather than served, the people they were sworn to protect."

FBI Special Agent in Charge Daniel R. Dzwilewski commented, "The FBI takes its responsibility to combat public corruption very seriously. Whether it be high-ranking Congressmen, or lower level officials, the FBI will always consider public integrity among its highest priorities. This type of corruption poses a fundamental threat to the security of our border and nation."

Richard L. Skinner, Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Inspector General (OIG) said, "The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is comprised of many dedicated men and women who work hard to protect our borders and our national security. The alleged conduct of this CBP Inspector is serious and disturbing. We remain committed to working with our internal and external partners to aggressively investigate all allegations of corruption to protect our borders and the integrity of DHS personnel, programs, and operations."

"Human smuggling is a greed-driven crime and nothing illustrates that ruthlessness more vividly than this case, where the smuggling organization allegedly bought off a law enforcement officer," said Miguel Unzueta, Special Agent in Charge of the ICE office of investigations in San Diego. "Given what's at stake, attacking and dismantling these schemes is a top ICE enforcement priority."

Adele Fasano, Customs and Border Protection Director of Field Operations said, "CBP cooperates fully with investigative agencies on matters involving employee integrity. Officer integrity is an essential

part of our agency and its mission. CBP does everything within its power to ensure that employees involved in illegal activities are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

The defendants are expected to be arraigned before United States Magistrate Judge William McCurine, Jr. on Friday, June 9, 2006.

DEFENDANTS

Criminal Case No. 06 CR 1195-LAB

Richard Elizalda	(Counts 1 - 11)
Raquel Arin	(Counts 2, 6-8)
Perla Centella	(Counts 2, 6-8)
Carmen Alvarado	(Counts 2 and 14)
Sandra Munoz	(Counts 2 -5, 15)
Kenneth Web	(Counts 2, 6-8)
Victor Gomez	(Counts 2, 9-13)
Jorge Gomez	(Counts 2, 9-13)

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 18, United States Code, Sections 201(b)(2)(A) and (C) - Bribery by a Public Official
Maximum Penalties: 15 Years in Custody; \$250,000 Fine (Or 3X the bribe, whichever is greater)

Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and Title 18, United States Code, 371 - Conspiracy To Bring in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain
Maximum Penalties: 5 Years in Custody; \$250,000 Fine

Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and Title 18, United States Code, Section 2- Bringing in Illegal Aliens For Financial Gain and Aiding and Abetting
Maximum Penalties: 15 Years in Custody (5 Year Minimum Mandatory); \$250,000 Fine

Title 21, United States Code, Sections 952 and 960 and Title 18, United States Code, Section 2- Importation of Marijuana and Aiding and Abetting
Maximum Penalties: 40 Years in Custody (5 Years Minimum Mandatory); \$2 Million Fine

Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1) and Title 18, United States Code, Section 2 - Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Distribute and Aiding and Abetting
Maximum Penalties: 40 Years in Custody (5 Years Minimum Mandatory); \$2 Million Fine

Title 26, United States Code, Section 7206(1) - Filing False Tax Return
Maximum Penalties: Three Years in Custody; \$100,000 Fine

Title 28, United States Code, Sections 981(a)(1)(C), 982(a)(6) and 2461 - Criminal Forfeiture

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation

United States Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement

United States Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General

United States Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of Professional Responsibility

Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation

United States Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism Contraband Enforcement Team

San Diego County Sheriff

An Indictment itself is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged. The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.